

SPSO decision report

Case: 202204217, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the care and treatment that they received from the practice prior to receiving a diagnosis of a cancerous brain tumour, for which C underwent surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. C had eight consultations at the practice over the course of ten months prior to receiving a referral to the neurology department.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that there was a missed opportunity for the practice to review C in person and consider an earlier neurological referral on the basis of C's worsening symptoms. We upheld the complaint. During the course of the investigation, the practice acknowledged these failings and took action to address them.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to offer a face-to-face appointment and neurology referrals, and for the practice's shortcomings in their complaint response. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <http://www.spsso.org.uk/meaningful-apologies>.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- The practice's complaints handling procedure should ensure that complaints are properly investigated and responded to, are accurate and that failings are identified.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.